

Secular Interest, Infincerity and Double-Dealing
in Religion, Detected and Exposed.

IN A 1608/715.

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

ASSIZES AT SALOP,

March the 25th 1715.

By GEORGE FELTON, M. A.

*Publish'd at the Request of the HIGH-SHERIF, and to
Vindicate the Author, from the Carwils of some against it.*

2 T I M. iv. 3.

*The Time will come, when they will not endure sound Do-
ctrine.*

St. L U K E iv. 21.

This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears.

S A L O P;

Printed and Sold by John Rogers, and John Phillips,
Booksellers in Salop, and by Tho. Varnam, John Of-
born and Will. Taylor, Booksellers in London. 1715.
[Price 4d]

Secular Interest, Indecently and Double-Dealing
in Religion, Detected and Exposed.

IN A
SERMON

Preached at the
ASSIZES AT SALOP



BY GEORGE FLETCHER, M.A.

Preached at the Request of the Hon. SHERRIFF, and is
Printed by the Author, from the Manuscript of the same.

2 T. I. M. iv. 3.
The Times will come, when they will not endure (said to
be).

St. LUKE iv. 21.
This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears.

2 A L O P.

Printed and Sold by Wm. Rogers, and John Poulton,
Booksellers in Salop, and by Jas. Newman, John O.
Lee and Will. Taylor, Booksellers in London. 1715.
[The 4.]

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
WILLIAM CHURCH Esq;
HIGH-SHERIFF of the
COUNTY OF SALOP.

SIR;



THE following plain Discourse, Preach'd
at your Request, is now made Pu-
blick at your Command. It has no-
thing to Recommend it to the World,
but an Honest Design to expose a Sin so odious in
it self, that, tho' many have countenanc'd it by their
Practice, yet none wou'd turn Advocates for it. Let
the Fate of it be what it will; I am certain to gain
this point by it: In making my ACKNOWLEDG-
MENTS to you, as Publick, as my OBLIGATI-
ONS are; and leaving my self upon Record, with
all due Respects,

Your most Obliged

Humble Servant

and Chaplain

GEORGE FELTON

DRAYTON, April

12. 1715

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
 WILLIAM CHURCH ESQ
 HIGH-SHERIFF of the
 COUNTY OF SALOP.

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All due Respects,
 Your most Obedient
 Humble Servant
 and Chaplain
 GEORGE FITTON

BRISTOL April
 12. 1771.

IN A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the Assizes at SALOP.

St. JOHN vi. 26.

Jesus answered them, and said, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not, because ye saw the Miracles, but because ye did eat of the Loaves, and were filled.

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'Twas the Case of the Persons concern'd in the text; who put on the *appearance* of Religion, when they had quite another thing in view: They *followed* Christ, but it was purely to *overtake* the World: They *sought* him, but it was to *serve* themselves. And in the Prosecution of this design, they were not baffled by a disappointment of meeting with him, in one place, from Pursuing him to another; Neither the Hazards of a Voyage, nor the threats of the Elements, cou'd blunt their Appetites, or put a stop to their Enterprize; Come on't what would, *they were resolved to go their full lengths*: as the children of this World generally do, and fall short of nothing; that may be had at the expence of Conscience and Honour.

hypocrisis In the context we have an Account, what pains the Multitude, fed by a MIRACLE) took, to discover their INGRATITUDE, and HIPPOCRISY. And when they had found their Benefactor, who reliev'd their Bodys, but intended greater Relief to their Souls, they Accosted him with a sawning Question: *Rabbi, when comest thou hither?* But Jesus (as his usual manner was) wou'd not, in Answering an Impertinent Question, loose an opportunity of giving a seasonable reproof: *He answered them and said, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the Miracles, but because ye did eat of the Loaves; and were filled.* And certainly no Age (except that, in which



which the reproof was given) cou'd be more liable to it than the present is. For Religion is now-a-days made a *common prostitute*, and turn'd into different shapes and forms, according as the Interests of particular Persons vary.

How many are there, who of late did, and, 'tis to be fear'd, do still creep to our Altars, and join in Communion with our Church; not out of any Respect and Veneration to the Institution of it, but because the Laws of the Land have so order'd it, *That such persons who turn their backs upon that Holy Ordinance, are not fit to have a trust lodged in 'em.* So that they must either comply with the demands which the Law makes, or renounce all claim to their Post, how advantageous soever it may be. These *Trimmers in Religion*, are like *Naaman*, who was content to bow in the Idolatrous house of *Rimon*; It's probable not so much out of complaisance to his Master, as to himself: *He had rather bow than break.* Tho' he had an aversion both to the place, and the Rites of it; yet being General of the King of Syria's Forces, wou'd become an Occasional Idolater, and stretch his Conscience to keep his Post.

Religion, tho' it ought to take place of all other things, yet is put to very base ends, and used as a *Colour and Varnish*, to daub over the foulest and blackest designs. For what crime is there so Hellish, or however opposite to the Laws both of God and Man.

2 Kings v.
18. + *Rimmon*
Complaisance
Dr. South.

But Men will bring in Religion to Patronize it: So true is that Propheſie of our Saviour, *ſ: vi. 2. Whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth Gods ſervice.* The truth of which the Diſciples very ſeverely felt; who, becauſe their Doctrines were not agreeable to the humours of thoſe times, were very unmercifully handled by ſuch Men; who being conſcious to themſelves of the irregularity of their own Lives, thought that they were the perſons againſt whom the Doctrines of the Apoſtles were more particularly levell'd. And as Religion has been the cunningly deviſed refuge, to which the miſguided Zealot has reſorted; ſo it has been an Engine, to ſerve a Secular Turn, and to bring about any private advantage.

That the firſt Publication of the Goſpel, met with ſuch Profeſſors, as carried their Religion no farther, than their worldly Interſt bore it Company, is evident from our Saviours reproof in the Text. The perſons reproofed, no doubt of it, beheld his *Miracles* with as much *outside Devotion* as may be: But our Saviour, who knew their hearts, found that theſe were not right with him.

In theſe times, we find that Men receive any impreſſion, and ſhrink themſelves into the Mold, and put on the Complexion of the Age. Religion is uſed as an *Occaſional Qualification*, that may either be taken up, or let alone, according as it either promotes, or obſtructs their Temporal Interſt.

Such

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Such Disciples of *Machiavel*, are punctually strict in observing that known Maxim of their Master: *That the shew of Religion is helpful to the Politician, but the reality of it hurtfull and pernicious.* This baffes all the Reproofs of Conscience, helps 'em to lay aside all restraints, that may obstruct their proceedings, how unwarrantable soever they may be in themselves. The Grand device that's set on foot by such, is, how to reconcile all possible Methods of thriving in the World, to the rules and precepts of the Gospel. If Men cannot pay a joint service to GOD and MAMMON; they'll let their Creator alone, and accept of the Devils *τὰ ἄρα πάντα οὐ δύνανται*, *Mat. iv. 9* *All these things will I give thee*; Which is in effect, nothing.

So great is the prevalency of Vice, that he who cannot wittily Joke upon God and Religion, and blaspheme his maker, wants one necessary Accomplishment, to recommend him to the favour of the Men of these times; who use Religion, as they do their Garments, and put it on, when the Mode of the Age requires it; only with this difference, that they constantly cloath in one drels or other, but Religion is only taken to, when they can in the Phrase of the World *make a Hand out*: when they can have Temporary wages for their Service; for as to the rewards of another life, these are at too great a distance to affect 'em.

'Tis

'Tis to be fear'd, there are too many in the World, who Copy after the Practices of those great Men, upon whom they depend, either for Interest, Honour, &c. or else, are sway'd by a servile Fear of their Frowns, and so on; like *Pilate*, rather than be accounted *Cæsars Enemy*, will acquit *Christ* one Minute, and condemn him the next.

Jo. xix.
12---16.

And this *secular Interest*, has not only occasion'd an odious indifference to all Religions, and all Communions, which is truly call'd *Lukewarmness*, tho' designedly recommended under the specious Title of *Moderation*; but it has likewise been the Parent, and Nurse of **SCHISM**. It has been the constant practice of such as headed a *faction*, to purchase those Profelytes with *Coin*, which they could not bring over with *Arguments*. And for this end and purpose, there are many considerable funds among the *Separatists* of all kinds, which are used, (as opportunity serves) to betray such Persons, as either cannot, or else will not discern the *poison* that lies under the bait; so that those who are Admirers of Filthy *Lucre*, and will part with Conscience and Honesty in exchange for it, these, in *St. Paul's* words, *fall into Temptation, and a snare*, and many other Hurtfull and Pernicious inconveniences. And as *Sordid Interest* is that impure Fountain, from whence our divisions at first sprung up, so they are still fed and nourish'd from the same source. The Dissenters have

By of Bri.
Hol.

1 Tim. vi.
9.

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have taken an effectual way, to secure a Succession of Men, to *few Tares* among us : For rather than the *factions* shall sink, they are encouraged by such Contributions, as very often exceed the Abilities of the Donor.

And pray what can be the reason, that there are so many OCCASIONAL CONFORMISTS in the World? Men that *halt between Two Opinions*, that can go both to the Church and *Conventicle*, and plead *Conscience* for both? But only that they are willing to keep up a *Double Interest* in the World. They can away with the *Doctrine* and *Discipline* of the Church, if it have that Superior Inducement along with it * GAIN.

1 Tim. vi. 5.

SCHISM, tho' the Composition consists of the most *bitter Ingredients*, yet, if *Gilded* over, is easily swallowed without any check or remorse of Conscience. *Doctrines*, tho' never so Heterodox and Monstrous, yet are easily digested by Men, who have *Itching Ears*; and who aim more at a Method of thriving in this World, than making any Interest in the other.

Such *Pretenders* to Religion as these, who *Judas* like, will Pawn their Master to Purchase the pelf of the World; who sacrifice the Honour of God, and the Interest of Religion at the *Altar of Mammon*: what pity it is they shou'd take shelter under the INDULGENCE, which is only allow'd to consciences TRULY scrupulous:

But

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But let us, who abhor such proceedings, consider what an Admirable Cause we have in hand, as we are Christians, viz. That of God and Religion: in the maintaining of which, Integrity of Life, and Purity of Intentions are required of us. We must aim at Gods Glory, and the good of our own Souls: And all other Aims and Purposes ought to be Subservient to these, as being the end of our Creation, and the only way we have of expressing our Gratitude to that Infinite BEING, who Created us by his Power, preserves us by his Goodness, and Redeemed us by his Wisdom, with the precious Blood of his only Son. And is not this a Cause great enough, and Encouraging enough to be taken in hand, without any *Temporary Inducements*? Are our Passions so link'd to Sublunary Objects, that the Joys of Heaven cannot engage 'em to look towards it? How can we be so forgetful of our Mortality, as only to lay in Store for this World? When our Continuance in it, is so very uncertain; and the utmost duration of it, but very short. 'Tis the Faithful Discharge of our Duty to GOD, that will furnish us with that joy and Peace of Conscience, which will Support and Comfort us, when all other Comforts and Enjoyments, of Life fail us. Let us not therefore Act so directly contrary to our true Interest, in Prostituting Religion, to Mean

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and *Miraculous* ends; but let's admire and embrace it, for it's own true Native worth, and Excellency. Then we shall not fall under that reproof of our Saviours; *Ye seek me, not because ye saw the Miracles, but because ye did eat of the Loaves, and were filled.*

In my further discourse from the words, I beg leave to consider this **REPROOF**, as consisting of Two Parts, viz.

- I. Christ Reproves those who overlook'd the true End of Religion, and
- II. Make an outward profession of it, in order to carry on a *made* **Sécular Interest ONLY.**
- III. Let me observe that such Persons, who are liable to these reproofs, must be **Profest Enemies to the Interest both of CHURCH and STATE.**

1. Our Lord reproves those, who overlook'd the True End of Religion, *and that sought him, but not because they saw his Miracles.*

Which words do point out to us, a slight that was put upon those Supernatural, and Extraordinary works, which Christ wrought to prove the Truth of that Commission, which he had received from God, to Publish his Religion to the World. And when Christ enter'd upon his Ministerial Office in the Power of Miracles, he expected, that Men

B

should

shou'd so Reverence that Almighty Hand, which plainly discover'd it self in them, as to be convinc'd of the truth of his Mission, and the Divinity of his Doctrine; and to receive and practice it, from a desire to obtain pardon of sins, and eternal life, which are the great Rewards of Gospel Obedience. But the Christian Religion is now deliver'd down to us, and the Truth of it asserted by many Miracles, which have stood the test of several Ages.

And we are now to seek Christ, as being fully convinc'd, that whatever he did, or taught, was by the Power of that GOD, *Heb. i. 1. 2. whose Spirit spake by the Prophets a foretime, and now hath spoken to us by his Son.* God expects that the Homage we render to him, shou'd bear some Resemblance of his All perfect Nature: That we should be Holy as he is, *1 Pet. i. 16 as he is a Spirit, so we shou'd worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* For his Spiritual Nature abhors such Godlineis as is Only Gain; and such Homage as is bare Lip-Worship. So that when we approach him, to receive Instructions from his Holy word; we must attend to and regard 'em, as being those means which God has appointed us for the regular Conduct of our Lives, in order to obtain Eternal Happiness. When we Address our selves to him by Prayer, we must not undertake it as a thing of Course, or to avoid the Imputation of Singularity; but we must be

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beforehand possess our Souls, with a Right Sense of our Wants; of that Dependance we daily have upon the Divine Bounty, and of the great Priviledge, which is allowed us, to practice that Duty. We must divest our selves of all Worldly, and Carnal thoughts, when we approach the Spiritual Feast, and Supper of Christ. We must use it as a *vehicle* to convey DIVINE GRACE to us; Not the empty and perishing profers of this World

It has been the practice of a Numerous faction, to comply with these solemn Ordinances, when their *Temporal Interest* required their Compliance; but such Obedience can never be acceptable, which is the Product of our Carnal Appetite; which proceeds not from a Christian Principle, but a desire to Serve a Present Turn, and compass a *secular advantage*. The adversaries of our Establishment urge that they divide from us upon a *Religious Pretence*, that of *Conscience*; Tho' all the while they overlook the *Sovereign rule of Conscience, the Holy Scriptures*. We may, by a very Moderate search into the Merits of the Cause, see, *That our own things, not those of Christ, divide us.* Interest, Humour, Pride, Prejudice, and what not, have all put on the Plausible Name of Conscience, and Act their parts with all the Vigour, and blind Zeal Imaginable. And indeed 'tis no strange thing, when Men forsake the Fountain of

See Dean
Young's
Friendly
Call to
our Dis-
senting
Brethren

that they shou'd be Entangled in an *Infinite Maze and Labyrinth of Error*. When they overlook the True End of Religion, almost every thing has Power to Influence, and new Principle 'em.

Such unstable minds as these *vary and fluctuate*, according to the different Faces of the Times; and are exposed to the danger of being carried away with every Wind of vain Doctrine, invented by the cunning craftiness of those, to whom no pleasure is superior to that of being Head of a Faction.

Give me leave to proceed now to the Second Branch of the Text, to expose the Error, and shew the baseness of such, as

II. Make an outward Profession of Christianity, in order to carry on a *Secular Interest ONLY*; or in the words of the Text, that seek Christ, that they may eat of the Loaves and be filled, and

1. To propose this as the Chief End of our Religious Performances, must be *highly displeasing to our Creatour*; who offers us Eternal rewards for our Momentary service. It argues the *deepest distrust* in us, to set up *Mammon*, in opposition to our *Maker*; the most *Egregious Folly*, to prefer our *own choice* to *Almighty Wisdom*; and the *biggest madness*, to part with *Heaven for a Trifle*. Nay we are the *greatest Malefactors* imaginable against
our

our selves. For since we are Created with such Faculties, as demand more Compleat, Satisfaction, than we can meet with upon Earth; since we find nothing here that can fill up the Measure of our Happiness: it may justly be infer'd, that there is furnish'd out, Objects in another World, which can completely do it. Otherwise, it would have impeach'd Eternal Justice, to have made such Creatures, and plac'd 'em here to Tantalize, and Torment themselves. The Question which has long since been started, *Whether there were more Pleasure in a bare Expectation, or the Actual Enjoyment of any Earthly Object?* Shews, that the pleasures here, are merely Eanciful; and what a mean Opinion, the thoughtful part of the World had of 'em. Indeed, they, that with the utmost Toil and Industry Ranlack the Worlds Store-house, and give themselves, as unlimited a Freedom in the pursuit of Pleasures, as Salomon did, and *withhold not their hearts from any joy; yet when* Ecc. ii. 10. they come to recount their Satisfaction, the confession of the Disciples is extorted from 'em; *We have sailed all Night and have caught no-* Lu. v. 5: *thing.*

How plainly do Men put a cheat upon themselves, by overlooking God, the supreme good, and relying upon the Expectations, which the trifles of this World raise in 'em; which produce nothing proportionable to their Appetites. For he that has the greatest

test Share, oftentimes complains of a deficiency.

But to put on the pretence of Religion, to carry on a *Secular Interest* ONLY, is

2. The highest Offence and Indignity, which can be offer'd to the Holy JESUS, *Heb. xii. 2. The Author and Finisher of our Faith*; who did in no wise design That, as the end of his Revelation. The Errand he came into the World upon, was this: To Rectifie our Depraved Natures, to gain us Admission into God's favour, the loss of which all the Posterity of Adam sustain'd, thro' his Folly, and *Tit. ii. 14. Disobedience; And to purifie to himself a peculiar People, Zealous of Good Works.* What more wicked suggestion can we entertain, than to think, that Christ wou'd come into the World to *do* and *suffer* what he *did* and *suffered*, for the Establishment of a Religion, which shou'd serve future Ages only, as a tool, to promote, and carry on their SECULAR INTEREST?

Had our Saviour approved of this surprising Chymistry of turning Religion into Gold, he had the fairest opportunity in the World offer'd him, to have made the Experiment. For the Jews had a long time possess'd their minds, with the Expectation of a Messias, in all the advantages of Earthly Pomp and Splendour; and when Christ appear'd among 'em, he was a Stumbling Block to 'em, upon this account chiefly, because his appearance was

so mean, and so much short of that Idea, which they had conceived of him. What offers did they make him, of Crowns and Dignities, to tempt him, if possible to assume that external magnificence, which wou'd have been so highly agreeable to their Humours? So that if Christ wou'd have suffered his followers, promiscuously to have jumbled their Spiritual and Temporal concerns together; and allow'd 'em a *Liberty of Conscience*, to serve MAMMOM as well as HIM; to be sure he wou'd have confirm'd this Freedom to 'em, by his own Example. But we find, with what contempt he rejected those gay offers which the Jews made him; which, when they saw, they were resolved to Persecute him, with the utmost degree of hatred. And accordingly they sought all opportunities to Execute their malice upon him. Thus he treated the World, and thus was he treated by it; and in like manner, he told his Disciples, that they must expect to fare no better, because the badge of their Discipleship was a contradiction to the Interest of the World. So far was he from allowing 'em to keep up a correspondence with the World in the Interests of it, that he pronounc'd a *Woe* against them, if they were followed with the applauses of Men: for so long as they continued his Faithful Disciples, the World wou'd hate 'em, because they were not of it. But into what a degeneracy is the present Age sunk,

opportunities

Lu. vi. 26.

Jn. xv. 19.

sunk, and how melancholy is it, to consider,
 that the Professors of Religion, shou'd put it
 to such base ends. " That Profit shou'd be
 " the only Touchstone of Faith and Man-
 " ners: that DIVINITY shou'd be the Hand-
 " Maid of POLICY; and Religions modell'd
 " by the Conveniencys of State? That such
 Doctrines, as are prepared to cure the Le-
 thargy of Sin, and rout Men out of it, and
 to shew the Hypocrite his Deformity, should
 be Persecuted with hard Names and Odious
 Titles, by those TIME-SERVING Men, who
 have a New Set of Principles, to fit the Ha-
 mour of every Age?

Our Blessed Lord appear'd in the world,
 when Vice was *the complexion of the times*, when
 the Courts of *Augustus* and *Tiberius* were as
 remarkable for their debauchery, as they
 were for their Politicks. And we find that
 he, without respect of Persons, boldly re-
 buk'd Vice, in whatever form or fashion he
 met with it; and however countenanc'd by
 the Grandees of the Earth. But had he
 aim'd at a Secular End, he wou'd certainly,
 in the first place, have secur'd to himself the
 Interest and Favour of those Persons, in whose
 hands the Chief Power was lodged. Yet
 this our Lord abhor'd; and by an Impartial
 search, discover'd, and expos'd all manner
 of Vice, tho' it was under the Patronage of
 Great Men. In short, the whole Scene of
 our Lords Pilgrimage upon Earth, was a flat

Con-

Contradiction to the Interest of it. " How
 " (as an Author observes) do we find his
 " patience mov'd, to see his Fathers House
 " made a House of Merchandize; tho' the
 " Traffick was for the Furnishing of the Sa-
 " crifice? With what abhorrence, must we
 " think, does he now behold those, who
 " drive so much a worse trade in it; who
 " sell not Accomodations for the Worship,
 " but the Worship it self, to Accomodate
 " their Interest; and do not only make gain
 " IN the Temple, but OF it.

3. Let those, who make an Outward Pro-
 fession of Religion; in order to carry on a
secular Interest ONLY, consider what occasion
 they give to Men of base and Atheistical
 principles, to return with boldness to their
 Old Assertion; viz. that Religion is only a
 Politick Contrivance, for the better and more
 Peaceable Government of the World; And
 since the end of it, reaches no further, than
 our present necessity and conveniency, there-
 fore we may use it, just as humane Policy
 and Prudence direct us. And pray have not
 these Men too much Encouragement, to stick
 close to their wild notions, when they see,
 that the professors of Religion, are not at
 all affected with it, any further than they
 can compass a Secular End by it? Nay in-
 deed have they not ground enough to believe
 that such persons are of the same Prophane

Fraternity with themselves: but only their bashfulness, Private Interest, or some such mean motive, will not suffer'em to make any publick declaration of it? Hence they judge that Men lye under no Necessity and Obligation to the Laws of Religion, because they see that by many they are used for by, servile, and fordid ends. " But as well may
 " an Atheist say, There's no such thing as
 " Good Nature in the World, because that
 " is apt to be imposed upon and abused;
 " nor any such thing as Love, because that
 " may be cheated; as that Religion is no-
 " thing but a Design; because Men may
 " make it stalk to their private Ends. Un-
 doubtedly, the best way to reconcile Men
 to Religion, to shew'em the Reasonableness,
 necessity, and pleasure of it, is, by the hear-
 ry, zealous, and unblamable Lives of it's
 Professors. By this, they'll be convinc'd,
 that 'tis a practicable thing, that the Induce-
 ment to it, is superiour to any thing upon
 Earth. When the true Sons of the Church,
 embrace Religion for it's own sake; and look
 above the Insignificant Trifles of the World,
 and by the Eye of Faith, enlarge their pro-
 spect beyond the Grave; the Uprightness,
 steadiness, and well temper'd Zeal of such
 Men, must create a Tacite Respect for Re-
 ligion in those Persons, whose practices pro-
 claim their Enmity with it.

See Still.
 Orig.
 Sat.

+ uprightness
 + Tacit

Since

Since we at every Corner meet with men, who endeavour to cancel all Obligations they lye under to their maker; and rather than they wou'd be tied to any rules, as an acknowledgment of that Power and Authority, from whence they derive their being, are content to level their *Original* with that of *Musbromes*, and think themselves the fortuitious Product of Nature: surely those who profess a contrary belief, shou'd be cautious of their behaviour; lest any Irregular Conduct, should confirm such Persons in those loose Notions, they have of God and Religion.

Till this Method is pursued, the Atheist will be an Atheist still; the Blasphemer will continue his Quarrel against Heaven; and those divisions, which molest and disturb the peace of our Excellent Church cannot cease, whilst *Interest* is the *Idol* they Sacrifice to, and *corruptness* the principle they are acted by.

Let me now observe,

3. That such Persons, who are liable to the reproofs in the Text, must *weaken*, nay *destroy* the Interest of the CHURCH, and by Consequence of the STATE too.

1. The Interest of any particular Church, must suffer by such Persons, because that of Religion in General does. 'Tis not to be expected, that such Ill-principled People, who Vilifie and traduce the most solemn ordinances of the Gospel, shou'd have any regard to

those of a *National Establish'd Church*, how deserving soever it's Establishment may be. Nay what Concessions can be thought sufficient to soften the Tempers of such Men, and reconcile them to it; when as oft as their Interest or Humour stirs 'em, they'll play the same Game over again?

I believe, no Church upon Earth can make juster pretensions to purity of Doctrine & Worship than our own can. The Articles of our Faith stand upon that *Foundation, which was built by the Holy Prophets and Apostles*. *JESUS Christ himself being the Head Corner Stone.* And the Exposition of 'em, is every way agreeable. The particular Articles of Religion, which she holds, as they distinguish her from other parts of the Catholick Church, are either in expresse terms found in the Word of God, or fairly deducible from it. We have *the Primitive Form of Episcopal Government* kept up, and a regularly ordain'd Ministry to serve in the Offices of a Church. We enjoy the benefit of Religion, in a Decent and Orderly Garb: not toppishly deck'd up in the superfluous Ceremonies of Popery on one hand; or *transcendently* turn'd out in the slovenly attire of Fanaticism on the other. The Romanists indeed have kept up a continued Quarrel with us, for retaining too few Ceremonies; the Fanaticks are angry with us, for retaining too many: whence 'tis plain, that our wise Reformers had Truth in their View, and

and not the Humour of a Party. If there were any thing sinfull, either in the Doctrine or Discipline of our Church; the Governours of it, wou'd be under the strictest tyes imaginable, yet further to reform it; not so much for their sakes, who dissent from it, upon empty Pretences; as theirs, who constantly conform to it: otherwise they must in the most literal Sense be partakers of other Mens Sins.

Indeed the Enemies of our Establishment, being at a loss, what to say to justify their groundless separation, urge, That our Church favours too strong of Popery. † But I think I may truly affirm, that whenever Popery is introduced into these Kingdoms, it will be by the joynt bands of the Fanaticks. “And (as an excellent Author rightly observes) “ ’tis no strange practice for a Romanist, to supply the mouth of a Conventicle, and by fuiting his Cant to the itching Ears of his Auditors, to carry ’em whither he pleases. Nay, he may appear bare fac’d in some Doctrines. “ The Quaker’s unerring light gives a handle

Mr. Sd.
wages Ser-
mon at
Hertford.
p. 14.

See the Collection of A. Bp Vobers Letters, fol. ult. & Let. 293.

Two Sticks made One.

Foxes and Firebrands.

Prynnes Quaker Unmasked.

NB. In the Reign of our late King James, the Dissenters were the Persons, who chiefly Address’d and Care’d for, when he was granting an Unlimited Toleration; the sign of which was, to bring in Popery. They were more specially taken notice of, and prefer’d, and those of the Establish’d Communion slighted.

to the highest Rights of the *Roman* infallibility.
 " *Antithomianism* is but *St. Peter's Indulgence*
 " in a more awkward dress; the Power which
 " *Independents* and other *Sectaries* usurp over
 " *Princes* and *Magistrates*, is a True Tran-
 " script of the *Popish Tyranny*; and O-
 " CASIONAL CONFORMITY, as now-
 " a days practis'd, is but the *mortal reservation*
 " of a Jesuit.

Is it not pity, that a Church thus well pre-
 pared, to answer the Cavils of her Enemies,
 shou'd be slighted, scorned and rent to pieces
 by such, whose God is their Belly, whose Godliness
Phil. iii. 19 is gain, who only mind *Earthly things*?

2. The dishonour, which these *Contradi-
 ctory Principles* reflect upon Religion, must ve-
 ry sensibly affect the *State* too, and wound it
 in the tenderest part. Were it not for the ties
 which Religion lays upon the minds and Con-
 sciences of Men, Civil Government, cou'd ne-
 ver hold up it's head, against the Assaults of Cor-
 rupt Nature. These wou'd incline men, to forfeit
 all pretence to honour and honesty, in the pro-
 secution of a Private advantage. All the
 Joints and Ligaments of the Body Politick,
 must seporate, Disunite and grow Feeble;
 when Men make themselves and their private
 interests, the Center of all their Actions. The
 happiness we enjoy, under a well regulated
 State, ought to inspire us with publick
 thoughts. Indeed the prospect of our Late ex-
 cellent *Queen's* Death, must have been black
 and

and dismal to us; had not the Succession in that Illustrious Family, which is now so peaceably and Happily settled among us, abated it's terror. The Celebrated Wisdom of our King has very early discover'd it self, by giving us repeated assurances from the Throne, that he will protect us in our *Religious*, as well as *Civil rights*: in discountenancing those, who under a Religious pretence of securing to us the Enjoyment of both, very treacherously undermining 'em, and *sunk* the publick credit to *raise* their own.

But since *all Government is of it self a Burthen*, tho' the greatest Wisdom sways the Scepter: 'Tis therefore a Duty Incumbent upon all, who wou'd shew themselves good Subjects, to contribute their best Endeavours, *to make that Burthen fit as ease as may be*. And the only method to do that, is, by a sincerely Religious conversation to secure an Interest, in the good Providence of that God, by whom *Kings Reign*; and to endeavour to stifle all those groundless fears and jealousies, which are industriously propagated to poison the minds of our fellow Subjects. We must every one of us in our respective Stations, discourage those, who disturb the Publick Peace of the Church, and by their wavering, unsettled principles, declare themselves Foes to all Religion.

To you more especially, MY LORDS, THE JUDGES, we humbly apply our selves for the redress of those Grievances, which Religion Labours under. And since your Com-

mit.

mission is from above, since an account of the Execution of it must be render'd to that Great God, whose Ministers ye are, and whose cause ye have in hand; therefore we hope you'll look upon your selves nearly concern'd in the Cause of Religion, and to advance the Honour of your great Master, by supporting the Interest of it. 'Tis from this fountain that your Authority derives a just and venerable weight, 'tis from hence likewise, that you are furnish'd with the best helps in the discharge of your Honourable Trust: which therefore not only warrants, but shews the necessity of Assembling our selves together, to implore the Supreme Judge, to assist, and go along with you in the Administration of Justice..

And since humane Laws only reach the outward Actions of Men, but Religion binds their consciences to their good behaviour: hence therefore you have often times the best evidence in the world against Malefactors, that of their own Confession; which they cou'd never be brought to, but in hopes of mercy beyond the Gallows.

From my Application to you, MY LORDS, let me conclude with an Application to the Majesty of Heaven in your behalf, which I shall do in the Words of our most comprehensive, and incomparable Liturgy.

That it may please thee, O Gracious God, to bless and keep the Magistrates, giving them Grace, not only Impartially to Execute Justice, but also Zealously to maintain Truth.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed as most due, all Honour, Glory, Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore.
Amen.

F I N I S.



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